

U.S. Coast Guard directs all maritime homeland and port security operations at the Port of Savannah & Port of Brunswick

Washington, DC - 12th District Representative John Barrow (D-GA) has signed on to become the newest member of the Congressional Coast Guard Caucus, a bipartisan coalition of nearly 80 members of the U.S. House and Senate who share a common interest in helping support the U.S. Coast Guard's valuable role in protecting our nation's borders, ports, and maritime installations.

"The Congressional Coast Guard Caucus works to help guarantee that the folks in Washington recognize the increasingly vital role of the U.S. Coast Guard," Barrow said. "Every day the Guard is on the front lines of homeland security, playing a key role in the War on Terror by protecting our nation's ports, shorelines, and borders.

And this coalition is committed to helping make sure the Coast Guard has all the support and resources they need to effectively carry out their mission."

In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. Coast Guard was moved from the Department of Transportation to become the military maritime service of the Department of Homeland Security. Since the start of the War in Iraq in 2003, the Guard has played a key role in Operation Neptune Shield

- protecting America's ports and borders with the largest increase in homeland security patrols since World War II.

Rep. Barrow, also a member of the Congressional Port Security Caucus, noted that the Coast Guard oversees all maritime port and homeland security measures at the Port of Savannah and the Port of Brunswick.

“The strength of Georgia's economy depends in part on the security of our state's ports,” Barrow said. “Each year the U.S. Coast Guard guides, inspects, and protects the tens of millions of tons of cargo coming in and out of Georgia's ports.”

The Coast Guard devoted 4,531 resource hours to homeland security missions in the State of Georgia in 2003 alone. They also responded to 144 search and rescue missions and 662 federal aids to navigation in the state. Currently, the Coast Guard has over 1,600 personnel in Georgia, including active and reserve military and retired personnel, civilian, and auxiliary staff.

The Coast Guard also plays a key role in securing the country's borders from drugs and illegal immigration. In 2004, the Coast Guard prevented more than 376,000 pounds of illegal narcotics from reaching the United States. In that same year, they also intercepted nearly 11,000 undocumented migrants attempting to illegally enter the country by sea.

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Contact: Harper Lawson (202) 225-2823

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